



Experience Your America

# Winter Explorations at Acadia National Park

Welcome to Acadia National Park! Following are some suggestions to help you plan your visit.

Welcome to Acadia National Park!

Winter is a time of contrast in Acadia. The turbulence of the sea during a storm gives way to the serenity of deer walking through snow covered forests. Leafless hardwood trees reveal the forest that was hidden during most of the year, while frozen ponds seal their secrets until spring thaw. Winter is a wonderful time to discover Acadia’s subtle wonders first hand, but also presents challenges for the unprepared visitor. Following are some suggestions to help you plan your visit.

Begin at the Winter Information Station

Open every day, weather permitting, except Thanksgiving, December 24, 25, and January 1. Located three miles west of Bar Harbor on Route 233 at park headquarters. Hours 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Scenic Driving

Although state and county roads on Mount Desert Island are plowed in the winter, most of the Park Loop Road remains closed due to snow and ice. Two short sections of the Park Loop Road are open year round. Plowed roads in the park are only plowed and sanded during daylight hours. Visitors may encounter heavy snow and icy conditions on park roads. See map inside and use the following directions.

Coastal Scenic: Includes shoreline from Sand Beach to Thunder Hole and Otter Cliff. Follow Route 3 one mile south from downtown Bar Harbor. At the Ocean Drive Dairy Bar, take a left, following Schooner Head Road for 2.5 miles. At the intersection, turn right. In .1 mile, at the intersection turn left onto Park Loop Road, which is plowed on the right lane for two miles. This section is one way for motorists. Snowmobiles use the unplowed left lane. Stay in the right lane. Do not drive over the snow. You must exit via Otter Cliff Road to Route 3.

Jordan Pond Area: Follow Route 3 from Bar Harbor to Seal Harbor. In Seal Harbor, take a sharp right turn at the Jordan Pond sign onto an unmarked residential road. In one mile, the residential road joins the Park Loop Road, which remains plowed to the south end of Jordan Pond. Snowmobiles use the unplowed right lane. Exit by backtracking.

Sargent Drive: Sargent Drive skirts the shore of Somes Sound. Carved by glaciers, the steep granite walls drop to the sea forming the only fjord on the east coast of the United States. Follow Route 198 toward Northeast Harbor. Continue past the junction of Route 233, driving 1.2 miles. Turn right at the sign indicating Sargent Drive.

Schoodic Peninsula: The scenic road on Schoodic Peninsula, the only part of Acadia National Park on the mainland, is open year round. Follow Route 3 to the mainland and through Ellsworth. Follow coastal Route 1 north. Turn right onto Route 186. Take another right when you see the sign for the park. Schoodic Peninsula is about an hour’s drive from Bar Harbor.

Wildlife Watching

A variety of birds and mammals are active in the winter. Great cormorant, American black duck, and large rafts of common eider duck can be seen along Park Loop Road. Small land birds like snow bunting, evening grosbeak, and golden-crowned kinglet are found throughout the island. Snowshoe hare in their winter coats are a common sight throughout the park, as are white tailed deer.

For your own safety and the well-being of animals, do not touch or feed wild animals. Feeding wildlife is against park regulations and can make them dependent beggars, unable to take care of themselves.

For the protection of wildlife and pets, and as a courtesy to other visitors, pets must be

leashed at all times while in the park.

Cross-Country Skiing, Skating, and Snowshoeing

Suggested routes for skiing and snowshoeing include 45 miles of carriage roads. Park volunteers may lay ski tracks on the following sections when snowfall exceeds 4”: Witch Hole Pond, Aunt Betty Pond, the west side of Eagle Lake, Parkman Mountain to Gilmore Meadow, Gilmore Meadow to Jordan Pond, and the Upper Hadlock Pond loop.

Forty-one miles of unplowed park roads, including the Park Loop Road and fire roads also offer opportunities for skiing and snowshoeing.



Skiing on hiking trails can be difficult or impossible. Usually snow is too shallow to cover roots and rocks, many trails are steep, and occasional ice floes block the path. Light snowfall may obscure trail routes.

Skating on lakes is possible, but lakes rarely freeze smoothly and free of snow.

Ski, skate, and snowshoe rentals are available in Bar Harbor.

Snowmobiling

Snowmobile travel is allowed on the 27 mile Park Loop Road (except a one mile section at Jordan Pond House), and most fire roads. The parking lot of

the Summer Visitor Center in Halls Cove is open to accommodate visitors trailering their snowmobiles. Parking on the west side of Mount Desert Island is available at Ikes Point, on Echo Lake and on the east end of Seal Cove Road.

- 1. All Maine State snowmobile laws are enforced in Acadia National Park. Pick up a Maine State registration sticker (required) and a regulation book at any town office.
- 2. Snowmobiles are not allowed on the carriage roads, except for the east side of Eagle Lake in order to make the connection to the Park Loop Road at Bubble Pond.
- 3. Snowmobilers must use caution and yield the right of way to anyone not on a snowmobile ie. Skiers, snowshoers, or hikers.
- 4. Snowmobiles must obey the posted speed limits in the park. The maximum speed limit is 35 MPH, but slower on the one section of carriage road where they are permitted.
- 5. Snowmobiles are not allowed on any hiking trails, or off road anywhere.
- 6. All snowmobile routes are two-way.
- 7. Towing people on sleds or skis is prohibited.
- 8. It is illegal to operate a snowmobile while under the influence of liquor or drugs.
- 9. Turn on your white headlight and red taillight one half hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise, and whenever visibility is less than 500’.
- 10. Drivers under age 12 must be accompanied by a person 21 years or older on their snowmobiles. Drivers 12-16 years old must be supervised by a person 21 years or older.

Ice Fishing

Freshwater fishing requires a Maine State license which may be obtained in town offices and various local businesses. Inquire at the Winter Information Station.

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## Acadia N A T I O N A L P A R K

### Acadia Safety Alert

Are you ready for winter?

#### *Let's be careful out there!*

- Ice often makes trails impassable and extremely dangerous without special equipment. Use extreme caution when navigating icy patches.
- Darkness comes early. Be prepared to turn back.
- Beware of hypothermia, a condition where exposure to cold causes the body's inner core to lose heat. Untreated, hypothermia leads to mental and physical collapse.
- Guard against frostbite. Dress appropriately for conditions. Extreme conditions and windchills can damage exposed skin.
- Coastal rocks are slippery and random waves can sweep you to your death.
- Wear proper footwear for your chosen activity. Stay on roads and trails.
- RABIES has been found on Mt. Desert Island.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times.

### Critter Crossings

Watch for Wildlife along roadsides.  
Be prepared to slow down or brake quickly.

### Thanks: To our Friends

Friends of Acadia is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the long-term protection of the natural and cultural resources of Acadia National Park and its region. To meet this aim, Friends of Acadia channels private donations to conservation and historic preservation projects in the park, monitors planning and legislative activities affecting Acadia, and publishes the Friends of Acadia Journal.

**For more information**  
Friends of Acadia  
PO Box 45  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609

**Or phone:**  
1-800-625-0321  
**On the web:**  
[www.friendsofacadia.org](http://www.friendsofacadia.org)

## Leave No Trace

Winter is the quiet season at Acadia for humans and wildlife. Gone are the summer crowds and full park campgrounds. Winter storms bring turbulent seas, but also the serenity of a single deer track between snow-covered trees. Research shows that most of the impact on wild lands occurs at low levels of visitor use. Please consider the following Leave No Trace principles and tread as lightly as possible in the "Quiet Season."

Plan ahead and prepare. Check on trail and ice conditions and plan to return before dark. From November to January, it gets dark between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. If hiking or skiing alone, tell someone your plans, or leave a discreet note on your vehicle.

Camp and travel on durable surfaces. Concentrate impact on established sites in high use areas. Avoid places where impact is just beginning.

Crampons and other footwear allow travel on icy trails without contributing to trail widening.

Do not walk in established ski tracks.

Midwinter thaws soften travel surfaces on carriage roads and trails. Wait for re-freezing before using those areas.

Pack it in, pack it out. You can pack out toilet paper, along with your trash.

Properly dispose of what you can't pack out. Human waste is the most obvious example of this. Get at least 200 feet from the trail and any water sources and bury it six inches. Please also consider the impact of your pet in winter, as spring thaws reveal trails and carriage roads lined with an entire winter season's frozen dog waste.

Leave what you find. This includes: not collecting; preserving the quietness of the park; not building more cairns for trail marking or other structures along the trail; respecting wildlife by not feeding or touching them. Wild animals fed by people often starve, are hit by cars, or become dangerous pests.

Use fire responsibly. Fires are permitted only in campground campsites and picnic areas. Gather only dead and down wood for campfires.

### Emergency 911

Acadia National Park  
General Information:  
207 288-3338 Voice  
207 288-8800 TTY  
Daily 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
TTY pay phones available outside the  
Hulls Cove Visitor Center, and outside  
park headquarters (24 hrs.)

